

2012

Conversational English. Session 1: Ask Around



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Session 1: “Ask Around”

At the start of the course the participants are likely to feel that they need a chance to meet and get to know each other better – hopefully without resorting to chatting in Bahasa Malaysia.

This survey activity provides an interesting way for participants to mingle and practice correctly asking and answering questions, and they can also have a little conversation along the way.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Devise a set of questions that fit certain parameters
- Interview at least 10 other participants and record their answers
- Answer interview questions from other participants
- Analyse the results of their survey
- Report to the group about their survey

Materials:

Trainer needs:

- PowerPoint presentation for this session.
- Facilitator’s notes.

Participants need:

- Participant’s notes for this session.
- Writing materials.

Participants need to be able to sit at a desk or table to write notes, and also to move around and ask questions of other participants.



Procedures:

There are a number of different types of questions in the English language, which can be confusing and frustrating for learners of English. Further complications can be encountered in selecting the appropriate verb tense in the question form.

Participants will be asked to pose 5 questions, each using a specific question form and verb tense and looking for a particular answer form.

1. Question Types

The following question types are referred to in the PowerPoint presentation.

a) Yes/No questions

The simplest questions expect a yes or no answer. We are going to focus on the following common examples:

- For the (simple) present tense: Do you ...? Yes, I do. / No, I don't. This generally refers to normal behaviour and routines.
- For the (simple) past tense: Did you ...? Yes, I did. / No, I didn't. This refers to a particular point in the past.
- For present perfect tense: Have you ever ...? Yes, I have. / No, I haven't. *Note:* The question needs to **past participle** form of the verb. *Example:* Have you ever **been** to America? Have you ever **seen** a penguin?

b) Open questions

Open questions are characterised by using question words such as

- Why?
- When?
- Where?
- What?
- Which?
- Who?
- How?
- How many?
- How often?

Note: In most situations the question word is followed by 'do' or 'did'. (If the answer is the subject of the sentence, there is no do/did. E.g. 'Who hit you?' In the question 'Who did you hit?' the answer is the object of the sentence.)

The problem that arises with using **open questions in a survey** is that you can get such a large range of answers it makes your data unmanageable. The solution is to then classify and group the answers, or start by asking multiple choice questions.

c) A hypothetical question

Surveys often ask hypothetical questions which use conditional verb forms.

For example:

Open question -

Q: What **would** you do if you had a million ringgit?

A: I **would** buy a new house.

Yes / No question -

Q: **Would** you feel hungry all day if you didn't have breakfast?

A: Yes, I **would**.



Here are the notes for the PowerPoint presentation:

Slide 1



Asking and answering questions is a vital part of conversing. However, forming an appropriate question can be quite complex.

Slide 2



There are a number of different types of questions in the English language, which can be confusing and frustrating for learners of English. The type of question depends on the expected type of answer.

And then further complications can be encountered in selecting the appropriate verb tense in the question form. (This session does not cover all types of questions, just a few which will be useful for our survey.)

Slide 3



The simple question expects a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

DO YOU ... ? (Simple present tense) for when you are asking about habits and routines.

DID YOU ... ? (Simple past tense) for when you are asking about an even at a specific time in the past.

Slide 4



The answer is "yes, I do/did" or "no, I don't/didn't".

Slide 5



The present perfect tense is a confusing mixture of present and past! We use 'have' as an auxiliary, and the past participle form of the verb.

An easy way to use this form – especially for our survey – is to ask the question "Have you ever ...?"

Slide 6



It's a yes/no question, and the answer is "Yes, I have." or "No, I haven't."

Slide 7



We do a lot of practice with open questions, which are characterised by using question words such as Why? When? Where? What? Which? Who? How? How many? How often?

Note: In most situations the question word is followed by ‘do’ or ‘did’.

If the answer is the subject of the sentence, there is no do/did. E.g. ‘Who hit you?’ In the question ‘Who did you hit?’ the answer is the object of the sentence.

Slide 8



The problem that arises with using **open questions in a survey** is that you can get such a large range of answers it makes your data unmanageable. The solution is to then classify and group the answers, or start by asking multiple choice questions.

Slide 9



When you get ten totally different answers, you could try to reduce it to 3 or 4 groups of similar answers.

OR when design the question with a few Multiple Choice options (one of them could be ‘other’).

Slide 10



A hypothetical question

Surveys often ask hypothetical questions which use conditional verb forms.

For example: Open question -

Q: What **would** you do if you had a million ringgit?

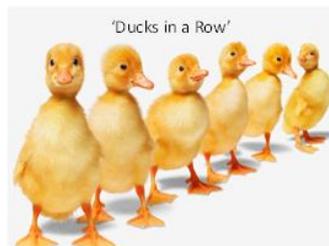
A: I **would** buy a new house.

Yes / No question -

Q: **Would** you feel hungry all day if you didn’t have breakfast?

A: Yes, I **would**.

Slide 11



Once you have asked your questions of at least 10 people sort your data (get your ‘ducks in a row’) and create a few statements to present.



Participant's Worksheet:

1. Asking yes/no questions about routines and normal behaviour

Example: Do you eat breakfast at home? Do you like toast?

Write 3 routine yes / no questions

.....

.....

.....

2. Asking yes/no questions about events at a particular time in the past. (The time may be stated or implied)

Example: Did you eat my toast? Did you go to work yesterday?

Write 3 yes / no questions about events in the past.

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.....

3. Asking yes/no "have you ever" questions. (Present perfect tense – use the past participle of the verb)

Example: Have you ever eaten yoghurt for breakfast? Have you ever been to MacDonald's?

Write 3 "have you ever" questions.

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.....



4. Asking Open Questions

Ask questions using question words such as ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’, ‘which’, ‘who’, ‘how’, ‘how many’, ‘how long’ ...

Example: Where do you work? How many children do you have?

Write 5 open questions using different question words.

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5. Asking Hypothetical questions with ‘if’.

Ask questions about a hypothetical or imaginary situation. (Notice the use of ‘**would**’, and the verbs in the **past tense**.)

Example: Open question –

What **would** you do if I **gave** you beans for breakfast?

How **would** you feel if you **didn’t have** any breakfast?

Example: Yes / No question –

Would you eat cake for breakfast if someone **offered** it?

Write 3 hypothetical questions.

.....

.....

.....

.....



2. Creating a Survey

Topic

Participants need to select a topic for their survey.

They can choose whether to work alone or with a partner.

They can choose *any* topic, but here are some possible ideas or suggestions:

- Food and eating habits
- Transport and travel
- Clothing and fashions
- Family and friends
- Houses, rooms, furniture
- Work and employment
- Education
- The future
- TV and movies
- Reading books and novels
- Favourite music

Participants need to select their topic and then create at least 5 questions, one of each of the types mentioned above.

With the (one or more) open questions, participants need to decide whether to accept all answers, or offer Multiple Choice options.

Participant's worksheet is below.



Create a Survey (Participant’s Worksheet)

Topic for Survey:

Note: Create at least 5 questions, at least one of each of these types:

- **Routines and normal behaviour (yes/no)**
- **Events at a particular time in the past (yes/no)**
- **“Have you ever” question (yes/no)**
- **Open question (‘wh-’ questions)**
- **Hypothetical question (yes/no or open)**

Survey Questions:

Type of question

Question



Type of question

Question

Type of question

Question

Type of question

Question

Note: With the (one or more) Open Question(s) you need to decide whether you are going to accept all answers, or give Multiple Choice options.

Multiple Choice Options for Open Question:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Multiple Choice Options for Open Question:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



3. Survey Other Participants

Once their questions are prepared, participants can mingle and ask their questions of at least 10 people.

It is a good idea to ask 10 people because the results are easy to report in terms of percentages.

Example: What do you eat for breakfast?

80% said they eat rice. (8 people)

10% said they prefer noodles (1 person)

10% said they just drink coffee (1 person)

Participants note their survey results in the worksheet table. (Copy below)



Survey Results

Write the name of the person you interview, and then *briefly* record their answers with a word: - yes/no, or the number of their Multiple Choice, or a word to describe their answer.

Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						



4. Report Results

Participants create a report about their survey results. They should make a number of generalising statements about the answers to their questions. This does *not* mean a list of every answer they received. Results can be stated as percentages. (If, for example, they have 10 different answers for one question, the report would state that all of the answers were different rather than listing each one.)

Participants may choose to come to a conclusion about their results about what the results show or prove.

The number of oral reports to the group will depend on number of participants and time constraints.

Participants work in groups of 4-10, reporting their results to the group.

Each group selects one (most interesting) report to be repeated to the whole class.

Participant's reporting worksheet is below.



Report on Survey Findings (Participant's Worksheet)

My survey was about (topic)

My questions were:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

My findings:

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Conclusions:

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